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# Greece on fire



pioneers of freedom

emfilox

by  
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pioneers of freedom

2020

to men, women and children of Greece

inspired by



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## The legend

Greece is a place where freedom is above all. Even above life. The human being is considered as a mortal body of flesh with immortal soul and potentially immortal spirit. It is our call to choose the path in life and our spirit is the guide. This precious heritage passes to each generation. It is the modern history of Greece, it is the Greek Spirit.

The origins are lost in countless centuries. Ancient times of Greece are more or less widely known all over the globe. Now it is time for the living history to come to the daylight· to be known who the modern Greeks are and what they did. How they fought against up to 10times larger enemies legions and how they decided to sacrifice themselves, their families and their fortune for the higher cause of humanity's dignity. How their Spirit, pioneer of the human values, galvanized in the furnace of the fall, gave new lads who denied riches, honors and privileges before the fight of freedom. They suffered poverty, emigration and pauperization, but they kept themselves alive. They gave new heroes and the slogan to the enslaved nations: "freedom or death". In the last two centuries they did it three times. This is the so far unknown modern Greek legend.

This script presents Greek values and ideals as preserved till our times· the present culture through the unbeatable Greek Spirit that was purified in the holocausts during the Great Greek Revolution in 1821-1829, the Greek Reborn in 1912-1922 and the Second World War 1940-1945. In modern times of iniquity, corruption, immorality and depression, the example of the Greeks is a precious essence, distilled through

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their holocausts, inspirited the whole Europe and further on the whole world showing the way to liberty.

My personal opinion in approaching history is that major events in the mankind's history stand above individuals. Persons, groups or people are integrated in the historical scheme. But I think that in some moments of their route some people have that moral influence that affect the historical flow. Thus I believe that the human evolution would have happened anyway, no matter if Greeks had fought or not: it would not though have had the same direction. The Global history alike was affected by the Greek Regeneration's influence.

Greece is at a meeting point where East meets West. A meeting point where Autocracy meets Liberalism. A fighting point between Slavery and Freedom. From the ancient times the Greeks have made their choice: they chose at all cost Freedom. Until nowadays they keep alive the ancient wisdom: "Be free to be happy, be brave to be free". The mankind's living history teaches that when Greece is on fire the world gets lighter.

These words though are not history. It is an opinion about the past and the future, about the way I see it, reflecting in our present. It is also a call to every one seeking the truth to study, because I believe that knowledge is power. These subjective lines are full of my love for the Greek ideals, the eternal light of humanity. My work is so dedicated to them men, women and children of Greece, whose sacrifice enlightens till our days the way to freedom.

Dimitris G. Koutsonikas

Athens, 20 January 2020

## The land of freedom

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century AC Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, Sterea, Peloponnese, Ionian Islands, Crete, Islands of Aegean Sea, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Pontos and Constantinople were one by one conquered by the Ottoman Empire. In 1430 fall Thessaloniki the major Greek city in Macedonia and in 1431 fall Ioannina the major Greek city in Epirus. The capital of the late Greek Empire was Constantinople which ancient name was Byzantium, so the also called Byzantine Empire ended when Constantinople fall in 1453. These Greek territories had been enslaved to the Turks and the Greeks thereafter lived in slavery for over four centuries until the Great Greek Revolution in 1821.

After the fall of the Byzantine Empire, many educated Greeks escaped to Western Europe seeking salvation. They disseminated then the Greek civilization all over the European nations triggering the new era of Renaissance. The end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century met the end of Middle Ages for humanity. The end of the Greek Empire started the beginning of Europe's enlightenment. The light of the Greek culture illuminated the people. From then it became tradition when Greece is on fire, humanity to become lighter.

During the slavery time though, Greeks never stopped fighting for their freedom.

- In 1458 Revolution of Greeks in Aetolia against Ottomans invading occupied Thessaly and Macedonia.
- In 1473 Revolution of Greeks in Chimara of Epirus under the warlord Vlassis.

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- In 1481 Revolution of Greeks in Peloponnese under the warlord Kladas.
- In 1489 Revolution of Greeks in Peloponnese under the warlord Palaiologos.
- In 1570 Revolution of Greeks in Epirus by their allies Venetians.
- In 1571 Greeks took part in the great sea fight of Lepanto by the side of the European United Fleet against the Turks.
- In 1585 Revolution of Greeks in Akarnania under the warlords Grivas, Drakos and Malamos.
- In 1611 Revolution of Greeks in Epirus under Dionysus the Philosopher.
- In 1628 Revolution of Greeks in the island of Zakynthos.
- In 1684 Revolution of Greeks in Aetolia and Chimara of Epirus.
- In 1765 Revolution of Greeks in Chimara of Epirus.
- In 1770 Revolution of Greeks in Epirus, Peloponnese, Aetolia, Akarnania and Crete by the Russian warlords Orloff.
- In 1787 Revolution of Greeks in the Aegean Sea and Peloponnese under the warlord Lampros Katsonis.
- In 1807 Greek warlords from Epirus, Macedonia, Aetolia, Akarnania, Sterea, Peloponnese, Thessaly and the Islands under Ioannis Kapodistrias defend successfully the island of Lefkada fighting against the Turk warlord Ali Passa.
- In 1808 Revolution of Greeks in Macedonia under warlord Vlachavas.

Despite the progress of humanity during those centuries the enslaved Greeks were living in a dark age. Slaughters, exhaustion, depopulation, pauperization, disasters, isolation, underdevelopment set up the life in Greece.

In the centre of Epirus thus, it was a place that remained free. It was called Souli. It was a small Greek commonwealth consisted by 7 villages with 20.000 inhabitants. They had a military force of 1.500 – 2.000 warriors, proved to be the best fighters of their time. The major warlords of Souli were

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Koutsonikas, Botsaris, Tzavellas, Drakos, Malamos, Gousis, Dagklis, Zervas, Peponis, Karampinis, Veikos, Fotomaras. They retained, through the dark period of slavery, the Greek way of living. They were free. The Sultan tried many times to subject them but they always won fighting against 5times larger troops. In 1732 Souli fought against the Turk warlord Hatzi Passa. In 1754 Souli fought against the Turk warlord Mustafa Passa. In 1770 Souli fought against the Turk warlord Mustafa Koka Passa. In 1772 Souli fought against the Turk warlord Souleyman Tsapari Bey. In 1792 Souli fought the first war against the Turk warlord Ali Passa. In 1800 Souli fought the second war against the Turk warlord Ali Passa. In 1803 Souli fought the third war against the Turk warlord Ali Passa. They won again but, as they were besieged, they run out of food and abandoned Souli. As they were hunted by the Turks they continued fighting. In Zalongo took place the sacrifice of the women of Souli which preferred to kill themselves and their children, than being slaves and later on, in Seltso, took place the holocaust of men, women and children of Souli. Only a few survived and escaped then, but those few grown up in the Great revolution they fought back liberating their country. The holocaust of Souli shakes the whole Europe at that time. Many artists hymned, painted and wrote about Souli, dressed in the fog of legend.

In the island of Crete, in the area of Chimara in northern Epirus, in Pontos in the Black Sea, in Mani in Peloponnese, in Macedonia, in the islands of the Aegean Sea Greeks the fire of freedom was becoming stronger.

In Europe all efforts for liberation had failed and in 1815 in the Congress of Vienna the Holy Alliance was established by the European Monarchs. At that time the Greeks started to organize their grate exertion.

## The Rebels

The Great Greek Revolution in 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1821 for national independence was an event that changed world history by overturning the domination of autocracy. Liberalism certainly existed in all nations, but they could only act when the Greek Revolution was established. It was the action of the Greeks that promptly reversed the route of history.

Understanding this phenomenon requires an understanding of the actions of the Greek Rebels. The enslaved Greeks inside and outside the Ottoman territory lived by the dream of liberation. They had different perceptions of how and when to start and there were a lot of contradictions, disagreements and hatred. But at the shiny point of the historic time, those who were truly patriots were thrown into the battle for freedom without taking into account their personal interest.

In 1814 was founded the secret Society of Friends, Filiki Etairia, by Skoufas, Xanthos, Tsakalof and Anagnostopoulos. They were living abroad and started organizing Greeks inside and outside the enslaved territories. Soon many Greeks became members and Alexandros Ypsilantis took over Society's leadership. In 1820 the Greeks were ready to rebel against the Turkish occupation. In December of 1820 the fighters of Souli moved against the Sultan's troops in Epirus. The plan was to take advantage of the war between the Sultan and Ali Pasha in Ioannina. In February of 1821 Ypsilantis moved his troops in Moldova against the Turks planning to direct to Greece. He was defeated and captured, betrayed by the Austrians but the Great Greek Revolution was finally ignited in 25<sup>th</sup> of March

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1821. The Greeks all over Greece stood by arms against the Ottoman Empire fighting for freedom.

Their Revolution last till 1829 when, by the Protocol of London, they gained their liberty. The years between 1821 and 1829 they fought against seriously larger Ottoman troops. Countless Greeks fall in this war and the Greek people all over the Turkish Empire were chased, slaughtered and almost genocided.

Kolokotronis, Karaiskakis, Androutsos, Mpotzaris, Papaflessas were some of the main warlords leading the victorious battles. Although Europe's people stood by the Greeks, the European governments were, at the beginning, hostile. After 1823 thus, they started changing their policy. Many Europeans went to Greece fight by the Rebels and many Committees were founded in every major city in Europe and in America to support the Revolution. In 1827 the governments of England, France and Russia upheld the Greek cause and the sea fight in Navarino took place, where the united European fleet destroyed the Sultan's fleet.

From the first year of the Revolution the Greeks voted for their Constitution willing to establish a Greek Democracy. The difficulties of the war, the civil strives and the European policy prevented it. In 1827 Ioannis Kapodistrias was elected by the Greek National Assembly as the Governor of the Greek State. As he was a world wide famous statesman he managed to ensure the concession of the European Powers for an independent Greek State. The Holy Alliance thus, wanted that state a small, poor Kingdom, not a wealthy democracy. In 1831 Kapodistrias was assassinated, but he had already ensured the Greek Independence with the Protocol of London signed in 1830. The Greeks though had to accept Monarchy and by the European Powers' indication, in 1832 Otto, from Bavaria, was enthroned King of Greece.

Despite the efforts of the Holy Alliance, along with the Greeks, the whole of Europe began to shift from despotism to liberalism. What had stopped in Europe again began thanks to the Greeks in 1821 and ended in the following century after two world wars.

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The Revolution of 1821 against the Turks was a concerted action by many Greeks at different times and places. They were in agreement or disagreement. They acted together or alone. They made mistakes, they were divided, they were killed and they killed. They were got carried away by foreign centers, slandered, made mistakes, but in the end they succeeded. They threw the slavery chain away, but not completely. In fact only a part of Greek Area was freed. They didn't get political freedom, they didn't get their land, they didn't get the right to speak freely. But the beginning was done. Heads of the effort were Rigas Feraios, the Soulioti, Filiki Etaireia (Secret Society of Friends), Kapodistrias, the Warlords (Kleftes and Armatoloi). After the Revolution weary of the overpowering efforts, the Greeks stopped for a while to heel their wounds and to raise their babies. They continued their quest for National Integration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Free at last

The 19th century marked the resurrection of the Greek nation. Their revolution in 1821 founded their national Reborn by creating after centuries a free Greek state. Small, unprivileged, poorly organized state but free at last. The Greeks, however in free and still occupied areas, never ceased to expect and seek the completion of their national status. Their main goal was the liberation of the Greek territories that remained outside the Greek kingdom. Those enslaved areas that were territorially and demographically larger than the free ones. Revolutions and uprisings of the Greeks continued aiming at unification in Epirus, Macedonia, Thessaly, Crete, the islands. The half-finished Revolution in 1821 had shown that their national integration depended on their own fight power. They were aware that diplomacy and alliances, though necessary, can be useful when there is a considerable military force. But the free Greek kingdom could not respond to national aspirations.

Exhausted by their struggle, the Greeks succumbed to the need for survival and accepted the conditions of their new state as a decision of the Divine Will. Disgusted by the hardships of war and the plagues of civil strife, they accepted the Monarchy. The recommended will of the people, despite the exceptions, became legality and subjugation. They embraced their King and looked forward to him as the Father of the Nation. Desires that were soon denied, but were then balm to their tortured souls. As history finally showed, the people stood above their leaders. the common will for regeneration had proved the strongest of all.

Warriors left and their families trapped by the terrible struggle were trying to survive in a desert landscape. The lands of the newborn Kingdom were destroyed with no infrastructure. Foreign powers, at a time dominated by the Holy Alliance of Europe, were in every way trying to control the newly formed Greek State. Formal or informal centers of foreign embassies, cooperating or fighting each other, often intervened to serve state and personal interests and ambitions. They appointed prime ministers, imposed ministers, promoted officials, covered up blackmails, covered robbers, speculated and they did not hesitate even to impose brute force to pursue their goals. The brazen intervention of the guarantor forces that plunged the nation into despair caused even the outcry of European public opinion.

Understanding the nature of that state lies in the interventionist policy of foreign embassies and in the Bavarian monarchical type of administration. With the imposition of the Monarchy, the Greeks, stripped and tortured by the War, began to learn that political life equals intrigue, slaughter, deceit, coercion. Bureaucracy, political partisanship, favorism, gangs of looting, corruption, arbitrariness, patriotism exploitation, adventurism, flattery, lawlessness, violence, injustice, calumny, vilification, isolation, subservience to foreign decision makers instituted the political environment.

With the advent of Regency, public life was ruled by the wasting of public money and illegal enrichment. The economic catastrophe, out of the ten year long revolution, had brought to the nation long-term financial ties in a form of external borrowing from foreign powers. These loans since the revolutionary period may have served diplomatic purposes and military needs but had been on bold terms. They pledged the economic policy of the state and allowed foreign centers to intervene on account of their benefit. Many times foreign governments have used Greece's public debt as a mean of pressure and dynastical control treating Greece as their colony. In addition, they favored suspicious men in public life, created frivolous misconduct and caused divisions among the destitute people. This situation exacerbated the budgetary

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problem and increased the need for new lending so that Greece gradually became indebted to all major countries.

The unsolved issue of national lands, which had also become problematic since the Revolution started, burdened general poverty. This issue had been raised since the beginning of the Struggle, when the Senate in Chaltezes voted for all Turkish estates to be nationally accountable at the disposal of those who worked until then as slaves but further on as rightful renters with the proceeds going to a National Fund. However, the National Assemblies were dominated by oligarchs who were not interested in equitably distributing national lands but plundering it for their own benefit. With the advent of Kapodistrias one of his most serious problems was the reactions of foreign lenders and patrons who prevented the distribution of national estates. The fierce diplomatic struggle in Europe of that time delayed distribution with legitimate titles. This just solution that would elevate Kapodistrias to the Greek people bothered the greed of the local Kotzabasides (a Turkish type of oligarchs), aspiring new landlords in the place of old landlords. It also annoyed the Foreign Forces who wanted the national estates as collateral for their loans and also infringed on the Governor's popularity.

The assassination of Kapodistrias eventually annulled the distribution of national lands that became the subject of illicit enrichment and corruption, eventually abolished the reconstruction program. The monarchical administration that followed brought about corruption and illicit enrichment through arbitrary and irregular concessions, as in the case of Piraeus. The people also looked forward to the retirement of the crippled militants and the restitution of those who were healthy and virtuous in the ranks of the national army. The people expected from King Otto that he would distribute the national estates fairly and give all Greeks the opportunity to live in dignity but the hopes of the Greeks quickly faded. The army troops organized during Kapodistrias' administration had been dispersed by the Bavarians and thousands of fighters who had given their blood for the freedom of their homeland were literally left on the streets. Exhausted physically and mentally by

the war the freedom fighters and their families were led then to total poverty. Many of them in order to survive became mutineers or became gangsters by powerful rich men losing their reputation. In 1835 an attempt to distribute national land was led by the bureaucracy and domestic corruption in abusive days. At that time, new Kotzabasides were beginning to appear, unscrupulous people who enjoyed calling themselves lords, which by all means gathered land and wealth. With the power of their stolen money, the alliance of corrupted politicians, the envious of the Bavarians and other Europeans, the passion of civil strife, the lack of education and the incredible poverty they started soon acting like Turkish overlords. Many veteran fighters ended up working on their farms for peanuts.

In this environment, appeared many scamps in politics, public administration and the economic life. The veterans were hunted mercilessly, beheaded by guillotine, imprisoned or were exiled. Political parties served foreign interests and became houses of personal ambition, wealth and illegitimate power. Because of the poverty many women and children were raped, family members had being persecuted, widows and orphans were starving. The Greek people suffered and were struggling to survive. Their main concern then became securing Greek society's cell, the family.

The former rebels then devoted themselves to raising their families with dignity and rebuild their cities, towns and villages. Amongst ruins and absent infrastructure the only solution for the majority was to secure a piece of land to build their home and reserve their food. They thus sought their salvation in the exquisite Greek nature and because of the unsolved issue of undistributed national estates the Greeks were dispersed wherever they could find land. This is the reason for the countless villages in Greece in the 20th century and the agricultural character of the Greek economy. Power and weakness at the same time. They were self-sufficient but under developed. They were sterling but under educated. When the time came though, the Greeks of the countryside defended their land and fought for their nation. The miraculous reborn was based on the dedication of the Greek peasants.

The newly formed Greek state, therefore, began its life within an oligarchic Europe, ruled by a Monarch, under authoritarian regency, within a corrupt political environment and in total poverty. Thus, oligarchy prevailed contrary to the nature of the Revolution and Greek people's mentality. The Greek governments, subject to the orders of the protectorate, were serving the policy of a blameless attitude towards the Sultan of Turkey. The state's foreign policy consisted of securing foreign powers' support by reaching the limits of arbitration and making the country a servant of foreign interests. Political leaders, focused on the foreign country of their choice, using the irresponsible royal family in the nation's diplomacy as a kind of a family affair. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so, the public administration was insufficient to serve people's expectations causing unrest, tensions and passions frequently exploited.

The Greeks, however, kept trying. In 1836 warlords Zervas, Malamos and Dimotselios in Agrinio unsuccessfully upraised for constitution. In 1843 in Athens warlords Makrygiannis and Kallergis successfully upraised for constitution and in 1844 the Greeks voted for their new constitution. In 1848 in the island of Cephalonia the Greeks rebelled against the British and in 1849 they rebelled against the Turks in the island of Samos. Also, in the heroic island of Crete the Greeks kept fighting against the Turks requesting union with the Greek State. They rebelled in 1841, in 1866, in 1878, in 1897. As the European States were against their will, every time their revolution failed in bloodshed suffering slaughters and persecutions. In 1854 took place in Epirus, Macedonia and Thessaly a major revolution of the Greeks seeking union with the Greek State. Although it was victorious, the violent intervention of England and France made the Rebels to withdraw. In 1862 the Greeks upraised against their King Otto, ejected him and next year coroneted King George of Denmark. In 1864 the Ionian Islands and in 1881 were united with motherland. Although Greece experienced some progress was remaining poor and misery. In 1893 the Greek State went bankrupt and in 1898 after the lost war against Turkey a year ago, Greece came under financial control of the International Economic Committee.

The wider historical knowledge, though, on that period is the premise for the understanding of the Greek nation's integration course. Europe was preparing to welcome the 20th century stemmed from long wars between the European states for dominance. At the same time, leaving behind the Middle Ages with the Renaissance, people struggled to overthrow authoritarianism. As European civilization progressed, European societies moved away from despotism to liberalism. Numerous revolutions and uprisings have repeatedly stated that European people had linked their prosperity to the prosperity of their native nation. In the last centuries of the second millennium, Europe was experiencing the birth of nation-states. History had finally justified people's instinct, as in the end, they experienced the highest ever prosperity.

That happened thus after enormous efforts and two world wars. The nation-states as representatives of liberalism prevailed over the empires of despotism. In this great conflict of the first half of the 20th century, small Greece had a leading role: reborrowing civilization's light and raising the flag of freedom took part on the battlefield of nations, by the side of liberalism against despotism. During the struggle, however, the will of the Nation was not always in the line with the will of the State.

## Reborn

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was dramatic for the mankind. During those decades two world wars shocked the globe and a fight between liberalism and despotism took place. The First World War was the first part of that struggle. Greece participated on the side of the liberal nations in an adventurous way.

At the beginning of that century Greece experienced disappointment, maladministration, disruption and anguish for the enslaved Greeks in Turkish Empire. Despite the fact, that the brutal Turkish occupation was barbaric for all dominated nations, they could not follow a common action. On the contrary, they fought each other, especially in Macedonia, where during the years 1904 – 1908 the Greeks and the Bulgarians claimed the protection of the local population, in an informal war. That war ended when the military coup of Neo-Turks occurred in Turkey forcing constitutional changes.

Meanwhile, in Greece in 1909 the Army upraised against the Royal Family and the inefficient political parties, demanding modernization of the State and empowerment of the Army. During that military coup in Athens, in Goudi, Army and Navy officers forced political changes. In 1910 a new political leader, Eleftherios Venizelos, was elected as a prime minister. King George was fascinated by his character and fully supported him. Venizelos continued state's modernization and strengthened the Greek Army and Navy. He established a policy of national unity and political cooperation, mobilizing all available sources. Soon after in 1912 the First Balkan War exploded. Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Greece allied against Turkish Empire to liberate their enslaved fellows. In a

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few months the Turks were defeated. Macedonia and Epirus were free again. All allied armies fought admirably, but the victory of the Balkan Allies based in the heroic Greek Navy which overpowered against the Turkish fleet in the Aegean Sea, blocking the massive reinforcement of the fighting Turkish troops from the huge Asian Army. The Turkish Empire surrendered and the islands of the Aegean Sea were free again. In 1913, as Bulgaria claimed the major city of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, took place the Second Balkan War. Greece and Serbia fought against Bulgaria. Bulgaria attacked first and lost.

The European States followed the Balkan wars in a great interest but the fragile diplomacy prevented any intervention. A great conflict though, between liberalism and despotism, was about to erupt and in 1914 the First World War exploded. Greece was allied to France and England but a great dispute occurred. As King George was murdered in 1913 in Thessaloniki, his son Konstantin became King of Greece. But King Konstantin was married to the Kaiser's sister and he was a great admirer of the German Empire. King Konstantin was a fan of despotism. That caused a civil strife. In 1915 Venizelos was expelled and royal friendly politicians took over in a non democratic way.

The major event of the argument between Venizelos and King Konstantin was the Dardanelles Operation. In 1914 England suggested Greece to force in a common operation the Dardanelles, the narrow sea passage to Constantinople. It was a British idea based on a Greek plan, draw up by Army General Staff deputy Chief Metaxas. Metaxas was a great admirer of the German Empire. In the beginning of 1915 Winston Churchill suggested to force Dardanelles and Venizelos enthusiastically accepted. The strategic idea was to defeat Turkey, force Bulgaria to join Entente alliance, stop Romania's neutralization, support Serbia and defeat Austria. After that Germany would have had to surrender. This is exactly what happened in 1918 and Germany lost the war, instead of a draw, after millions of human losses. In January of 1915, though, the King Konstantin said no to Venizelos. Or to be accurate, he said yes but when Metaxas refused to confirm the plan, King

Konstantin also said no. Metaxas was a secret counselor of Kaiser's sister Queen of Greece Sofia. The war continued for over two years.

Great Britain attacked Dardanelles in March of 1915 without Greece and failed. The crucial period from January and March though gave time to the Germans to advise the Turks to fortify the area under the German's supervision and support. Beside that the British lacked the Greek Navy's participation, if Greek and British troops had attacked Gallipoli before it got reinforcement they probably could have had succeeded. In that case the World War could have been ended two or three years earlier and a great catastrophe would have been prevented.

Anyway, the Turks, under the supervision of the German general Leman von Sanders, had already started displacing, expelling and exterminating the Greek population in Asia Minor from the start of 1914. The very same barbaric policy continued until 1922 genociding 2 millions of Greeks in Asia Minor and in Pontos. This is why the Greek Army General Staff had made plans for invasion in Gallipoli and Smyrna months before the blast of the World War. Greece by that time was just out of the Balkan Wars, magnified and victorious but politically unstable. The effort for liberalization in 1909 – 1912 remained incomplete. The party favoring despotism in Greece had rallied around King Konstantin who had been a glorious general after the amazing victories of the Greek Army under his command. Meanwhile, Greece was experiencing an undercover battle between foreign powers' secret services. The Germans were supporting Greece's neutrality over the War and the Anglo-French were supporting Greece's participation. Secret services with their agents and local partners used all kind of informal methods to achieve their goals. Therefore the country got divided. In September of 1916 King Konstantin, who was controlling the government, refused to fight the German and Bulgarian troops invaded Macedonia, ordering the surrender of the Fourth Greek Army Corps. That triggered the action of many Greek officers in Thessaloniki. Since the summer of that year they upraised, organizing national defense, called Ethniki

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Amyna. The leadership of Ethniki Amyna was taken over by Venizelos, general Dagklis and admiral Kountouriotis. They started gathering a new Greek Army aiming to join the war on the side of France and England.

Until then, the European diplomacy was unfortunately focused in securing the alliance of Bulgaria and Turkey. When England and France realized that those countries were dedicated to Germany, Entente's army was stuck both in western and Balkan front. The solution appeared in 1918 in the battle of Skra in Macedonia. General Guillaumat, who had replaced general Sarrail in 1917, as a head of allied troops in Macedonia trusted the Greek Army and prepared the defeat of German – Bulgarian army in the Balkan front. In May 1918 the Greeks succeeded where the allies French, English, Serbian had failed a few months ago. Under the command of general Zymbrakakis they forced the outbreak of heavily fortified enemy positions. That victory showed that the defeat of the Germans and the Bulgarians was possible. As general Guillaumat was recalled in France, his replacement in chief command general d' Espèrey completed the plans of the final attack. In September of 1918 the allied army of French, English, Serbian and Greek troops attacked the German and Bulgarian army in Macedonia launching the Vardar Offensive. At the crucial point the Greek army under the command of colonel Gargalidis overtook the top 1421 on Preslap securing the victory for the Allies. After that victory started the end of the First World War.

The remarkable action of the Macedonian Greek Army, the amazing contribution to the final victory, the dedication of the Greeks to the values of liberty and the sophisticated policy of Eleftherios Venizelos raised Greece among European nations. Winston Churchill, in his memoirs, called Venizelos "genius" because of his ability in accurate perception, realistic approach and effective diplomacy. Venizelos was considered as one of the top world class leaders of that time. He along with Lloyd George and Clemenceau had realized the danger of communism expanding and decided to act. Against the fatigue of war and internal reactions they launched the Crimea campaign in 1919 in order to stop the Bolsheviks in

Ukraine. Greece participated by sending part of the First Army Corps. The campaign failed due to political reasons but thanks to the Greek troops Romania was kept safe.

After that the Greek Army, acting within the alliance, disembarked in Smyrni of Asia Minor liberating the ancient Greek territories after centuries of slavery. By the Treaty of Sevres Asia Minor in 1920 was granted to Greece, which was at the World War I winners' side. But in 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1920, like other leaders after war periods, Venizelos lost the elections and King Konstantin regime was restored. Greece's allies were severely annoyed because King Konstantin was considered as a man of the onslaught Kaiser who had bloodshed Europe. The conception of the fruits of victory had also triggered an unfair competition between the victorious States. Anyway, King Konstantin's corrupted regime launched in 1921 a huge military campaign in the heart of Turkey hunting the Turkish army to the surrounding areas of Ankara. Despite the glorious victories of the Greek Army the incapable Greek leaders did not managed to establish any real benefits. On the contrary, they abandoned the Greek Army in Turkey for a whole year until the August of 1922 when the Turkish Army attacked under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk. The decomposed Greek Army retreated falling apart, practically without fighting. The Turks killed and expelled the entire Greek population destroying all Greek cities and villages in Asia Minor. This is the 1922 Catastrophe of Asia Minor.

In September the rescued Greek Army, in Aegean Islands, rebelled against King Konstantin's regime. They arrested and executed 6 of the regime's leaders as responsible for the catastrophe. King Konstantin escaped in Italy and died there. Venizelos did not take part in the state governance but he led the diplomatic effort for peace. In 1923 the Lausanne Treaty was signed. Once again Greece was destroyed due to the 1912-1922 wars for liberty and the Catastrophe and had to treat around 3 millions Greek refugees from Asia Minor, Eastern Thrace and Pontos. In 1924 the Second Greek Democracy was declared and lasted till 1935 when George the 2<sup>nd</sup> coroneted King of Greece. The period 1924 – 1935 was politically unstable

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due to the vicious problems. The exception was the period 1928 – 1932 during Venizelos' governance. Then 4.000 schools were built, the effect of the world economic crisis despite the bankruptcy of 1932 was depreciated and founded the state's orientation to a western democratic administration. That specific political legacy of Venizelos savory worked out later, after the hermitage of World War II.

The awkward financial problems, the hatred of civil strife and the stormy international environment did not allow the new born Greek Democracy to last. In 1935 the Crown came back and George the Second was coroneted King of Greece. In 1936 a fascist regime was established by the loyal to the King Ioannis Metaxas, the very same former Army General Staff Chief. General Metaxas was still an admirer of Germany and an admirer of Hitler. In 1939 though, the reality became clearly visible. Germany in alliance with Italy, once again, were making plans against Greece. Axis was, once again, approaching Bulgaria, Turkey and Albania aiming to dominate in Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean. Despite the reassuring public statements from both Germany and Italy, it was obvious that hostile actions were about to happen. Although Metaxas never quit trying to convince Hitler to support Greece, in 1940 he realized that Italy was about to attack and Germany was going to allow it. By that time, Metaxas started adopting Venizelos' foreign policy, but there was no time for Greece to be adequately prepared for the coming storm. Plus, Metaxas was not the right person for England and France to be trusted. In 1940, Greece was preparing all alone to confront the Axis' powers.

## Changing history

In World War II the Greek nation resisted Italy, Germany, Albania and Bulgaria fighting for freedom. Beyond any logic they fought with unprecedented bravery giving their Allies the first victory for the liberal nations. Metaxas knew the will of the Nation for resistance and he said "No" to Italy, as he was aware of what he would have to deal in case of ignoring people's will. Metaxas died during the war while the Greek Army was defeating Italy in Northern Epirus and it is for sure that, despite his past, he would have done the same against Germany next April. The decision of the Greeks to fight the invaders was iron and solid till the final victory.

The war of Greece started in 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1940 in the mountains of Epirus and ended in 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1941 in the island of Crete. During that war the Greeks fought against the Italians and the Albanians in Epirus, against the Germans in Macedonia and against the Bulgarians in Macedonia and Thrace. That titanic struggle ended with the occupation of Greece by these four nations. Greece was victorious in Epirus and eastern Macedonia but was defeated in central Macedonia when the huge German army invaded. Although English troops were moving to help the Greek army, after Metaxas was dead, they did not arrive on time or efficient numbers. The collapse of the Serbian army had lost any hope for a solid front and the English army began to retreat in order to be transferred to the Middle East. Thousands of English soldiers were trapped then in Greece and for a long time the Greek people were hiding them from the Nazis risking their lives.

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The remaining Greek and British troops continued fighting in Crete until the final defeat in 1<sup>st</sup> of June. During the heroic battle of Crete the Greek government escaped to Egypt where started to assemble a new army. The German army arrived in Athens in 27<sup>th</sup> April 1941 and commanded Greece's occupation until 12<sup>th</sup> October 1944. The Greek land had been divided in three occupation zones: the German zone, the Italian zone and the Bulgarian zone. Those three and a half years of the occupation period the Greeks suffered tremendous plagues and paid a huge cost for resisting to the Axis but they put the foundations of the Allies' victory. The War of Greece changed history because:

- Italy was trapped in Greece and did not participate in the Middle East operations on time where the English troops were cheering. The Italian Army suffered so much during the War of Greece that they completely lost their militancy during the rest of the World War.
- Turkey, reminiscent of past warfare, waiting for the final outcome, because of the War of Greece did not joined Axis preventing the Germans from reinforcing the Middle East in 1940.
- Spain, stunned by the Italian defeat, refused to ally with Germany on invading England in 1940 when English were vulnerable and unprepared.
- Russia began preparing early against Germany as the Nazis were forced to split their military forces involved in Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, provoking the premature hostility of their former allies. Plus, because of Greece, the Germans started attacking Russia 6 weeks later, which may had been crucial for breaking the Russian defense before the catastrophic winter.
- Germany had to adapt the strategic planning reallocating a significant number of troops in Greece. Furthermore, the massacre in Crete prevented them from using the Paratroopers' Corps which would give them a crucial advantage in the Middle East and Russia while in both fronts they lost the victory in the details. Broadly,

the Nazis lost a critical strategic 6 months period just when they had an absolute advantage over the English. They thus lost the opportunity to prevail in the Middle East, Russia and neutralize England in a definitive way before the USA entered the war.

- England additionally gained in Greece an enormous moral advantage in the global struggle that ensured alliances and empowered the liberal forces. During the dark winter of 1940 – 1941 Greece was England's only ally power marching victorious.
- Greece's victory against Italy in 1940 was the first of a series of victorious battles that led to the final victory in 1945, when liberalism prevailed despotism.

Although Greece could have had chosen to stay neutral and not to fight, the Greeks and their Governor Ioannis Metaxas said "No" to the invaders. General Metaxas, the former Army General Staff Chief, had learned by his mistakes in the past and made the right choice, the only one that the Greek people would have accepted: resistance. The Greeks won the first battle against Italy in 1940 in Epirus. That was the first victory for the Allies in the World War II. When the Germans inadvertently attacked helping Italy, Greece fought them too. The Greeks also won the second battle against the Nazis in 1941 in Eastern Macedonia, but they lost the third battle in Central Macedonia, as they run out of troops when Serbia collapsed. Then, the Greek Army started retreat until the final surrender. The Greeks though continued to fight in all active fronts by the side of the English Army: in Egypt, in the Mediterranean, in Normandy, in Italy. In 1944 they gave their last battle against the Germans and they won. That was the battle of the River Rubicon. Major Karavias, named by the Allies as "Eagle of Rubicon" under the leadership of colonel Tsakalotos, led the Greek soldiers in a spectacular crossing of the River Rubicon overthrowing the German troops. That battle secured the victory for the Allies in Italy.

The Greeks also contributed to the Allies' victory through the invention of Radar. The Radar allowed England to

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defend their island against the powerful Luftwaffe and USA to defeat the Japan fleet in the Pacific, as the Axis' powers were ignorant of that secret weapon. Without the secret use of the Radar both Nations could have seriously risked their survival. The Radar was a top secret invention of the Greek scientists Santorinis and Artemis that the Greek Army delivered to the British in June of 1940.

Greece though for three and a half years lived a barbaric Occupation under the Germans, the Italians and the Bulgarians. From the beginning of the Occupation the Greeks started their epic National Resistance against the invaders. They continued to fight in the mountains as "Andartes" (Greek partisans) and in all major cities alone or in contact with the Allied Headquarters abroad. Mass demonstrations, dynamic journalism, strikes, escapes, sabotages, explosions, fights made the Greek cities, towns and villages a living hell for the invaders.

The cost for the Greek people though was enormous:

- Around 2.000 villages all over Greece were completely destroyed and the entire population was exterminated. Thousands of babies, children, woman and elders were brutally murdered.
- 350.000 died of starvation caused by the invaders who robbed the national food stocks
- 68.000 men and women were executed due to the action of National Resistance
- 185.000 men and women were imprisoned and tortured due to the action of National Resistance
- 85% of industrial structure, engineering workshops, ports, stations, installations, hydraulic works, communications, machinery, vehicles and equipment were destroyed
- Major Greek cities as Piraeus, Ioannina, Larissa, Corfu, Chania, Preveza, Cephalonia, Trikala, Drama, Alexandroupoli suffered extremely heavy damages.
- 25% of the Greek buildings were destroyed, the highest loses among Allies

## changing history

- 75% of the Greek merchant marine was lost
- 25% of the Greek forests and 75% around Athens were destroyed
- The Greek economy collapsed and 500.000% inflation caused a huge humanitarian crisis. The entire Greek population was deprived of principal food staff and reduced to a very low standard of nourishment, for many years after the war. Due to the hardships the general death rate increased by 700%.
- The national reserves in gold were lost
- A huge part of domestic production was stolen by the invaders
- All economic resources were absorbed by the invaders in formal or informal loans.
- By the year 1945 the entire Greek population was reduced over 12%. This the highest loses in human lives in the entire world, during the World War II.

The invaders started leaving Greece in October 1944. As they felt that they had lost the war they had became savages. The fact that the beginning of their defeat had started in Greece was growing their madness. The Greeks though endured heroically the liberation. That day came in October 1944. But, destroyed Greece had a new fight to win. In December 1944 the Greek Civil War started between nationalists and communists. Nationalists won and the war was over in August 1949. The peace in Greece came after the end of that struggle. That was the first battle of the Cold War and the first victory for the liberal nations during that global fight. Once again Greece had made the first step to humans' dignity.

## Present

Greece came out of the independence war completely destroyed. For the first hundred years of their freedom the Greeks struggled to heal their wounds and raise their children. In the early 20th century, however, less than half of today's territory was liberated. The Greeks continued to complete their freedom and at the same time took part to the First World War on the side of the liberal forces. Greece came out of this double fight, once again completely destroyed in 1922. Before their new wounds were healed, the Greeks coerced themselves into the titanium struggle of World War II, raising the flag of peoples' freedom. The war in Greece ended later than the rest of Europe, in 1949, giving the Western powers their first victory in the Cold War against communism. But again, Greece came out of the fight for freedom completely destroyed. During the second half of the 20th century the Greeks dedicated themselves to development and prosperity. They did it but not completely. They built the ruins, achieved a financial development, wiped out the hunger, rebuilt the schools but lagged behind in political and cultural evolution. The necessity of survival kept Greece in bondage to a policy securing development but not corresponding to what the Greek culture could offer. Therefore, almost half of the Greeks were forced during that century to migrate to various parts of our planet in order to secure their prosperity.

However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they have significantly contributed to the evolution of human culture. Examples include doctor Papanikolaou (who invented the Pap Test that saved millions of human lives), mathematician Karatheodoris

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(Einstein's tutor), physicists Santorinis and Artemis (who invented the Radar that saved England and USA in WWII), Nobel laureates Seferis and Elytis and countless scientists, pioneers in all fields, who continue, till nowadays, to work serving humanity. The Greeks' contribution, though, could be incomparably greater if during the past century they enjoyed freedom and prosperity. Anyway, those conditions, which were missing then, exist today. Despite the financial difficulties of the Greek state at the beginning of the 21st century, Greeks are now free and relatively prosperous.

Today though, Greece is in a problematic situation that can be reversed with an inspirational reconstruction program. For example, a long term urban reconstruction development plan could fresh up the Greek economy and would secure the necessary conditions for a cultural rejuvenation. A number of brand new Greek cities and urban structure can heavily contribute to a new era of economic growth and civil restructure, which would allow dealing with the modern problems in a modern way. If that plan is extremely hard to be completed by Greece itself, it is much easier and far more efficient if it is conducted by an international alliance of today's liberal nations. In that way Greece would become a vital model case in a global level.

I believe that in every human society, there are two opposing trends: liberalism and despotism. This reality governs the global geopolitical scene from the ancient time of the Persian wars to the present time. The Greeks, despite their numbers, have often had a leading role in the global struggle of free societies with authoritarianism, taking the part of liberal peoples, several times changing the course of world history and preventing despotism from dominating. That is a living history along with an ancient heritage of the unique Greek civilization, a living culture that serves humanity for centuries.

In recent history, Greece has been a faithful ally to England and France supporting every fight for freedom. A faithful ally in modern times also to the United States as it was in the past to Russia until it turned against the Greeks and the liberal militia, supporting their enemies. Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Tur-

## present

key, Albania attacked Greece in order to destroy it but failed. But while these countries were defeated in the war by the Greeks, after the war in time of peace all of them were heartily treated by the Greeks. Without grudges, despite their own poverty they have tried, especially in recent years, to assist them in their own effort for progress. The Greeks, once again, have shown that Greek culture is in favor of the peaceful coexistence of peoples and the common endeavor for prosperity.

So the people of the world have to ask themselves if Greek culture is beneficial to mankind, then they can choose to support it. When Greece is prosperous, the Greek culture develops. If this is in the interest of the people then it is our duty to pursue it. It is primarily a duty of all Greeks, inside and outside Greece's borders, since the population of Greeks around the world is approximately equal to that inside the Greek state. We all need to redevelop the Greek culture, the new Greek civilization. The global culture of mankind should immediately make progress and that's exactly what this book is aiming to, through a short description of modern Greece, to provide a fresh prospective. Just as the Greeks have been pioneers of freedom, so in our time they can, once again, become pioneers of civilization.

## Timeline

- 1430 Fall of Thessaloniki
- 1431 Fall of Ioannina
- 1453 Fall of Constantinople
- 1458 Revolution of the Greeks of Aetolia  
against the Ottomans invading occupied  
Thessaly and Macedonia
- 1473 Revolution of the Greeks in Chimara of  
Epirus under Ioannis Vlassis
- 1481 Revolution of the Greeks in Peloponnese  
under Korkodilos Kladas
- 1489 Revolution of the Greeks in Peloponnese  
under Andreas Palaiologos
- 1570 Revolution of the Greeks in Epirus by  
their allies Venetians
- 1571 Lepanto sea fight
- 1585 Revolution of the Greeks in Akarnania  
under Mpouas Grivas, Drakos and Ma-  
lamos
- 1611 Revolution of the Greeks in Epirus under  
Dionysus the Philosopher
- 1628 Revolution of the Greeks in the island of  
Zakynthos
- 1684 Revolution of the Greeks in Aetolia and  
Chimara of Epirus
- 1732 Souli fights against the Turk warlord  
Hatzia Passa
- 1754 Souli fights against the Turk warlord  
Mustafa Passa

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- 1765 Revolution of the Greeks in Chimara of Epirus
- 1770 Revolution of the Greeks in Epirus, Peloponnese, Aetolia, Akarnania and Crete by the Russian warlords Orloff
- 1770 Souli fights against the Turk warlord Mustafa Koka Passa
- 1772 Souli fights against the Turk warlord Souleyman Tsapari Bey
- 1787 Revolution of the Greeks in the Aegean Sea and Peloponnese under the warlord Lampros Katsonis
- 1792 Souli fights the first war against the Turk warlord Ali Passa
- 1800 Souli fights the second war against the Turk warlord Ali Passa.
- 1803 Souli fights the third war against the Turk warlord Ali Passa. Fall of Souli. Zaloggo.
- 1804 Soulriot's Holocaust in Seltso
- 1807 Greek warlords from Epirus, Macedonia, Aetolia, Akarnania, Sterea, Peloponnese, Thessaly and the Islands under Ioannis Kapodistrias defend successfully the island of Lefkada fighting against the Turk warlord Ali Passa
- 1808 Revolution of the Greeks in Macedonia under warlord Vlachavas
- 1814 Filiki Eteria - Secret Society of Friends
- 1815 Foundation in Vienna of Holy Alliance
- 1820 Warlords of Souli start fighting the Turks
- 1821 - 1829 Great Greek Revolution
- 1827 - 1831 Greek State under Ioannis Kapodistrias
- 1827 Sea fight in Navarino

## Timeline

- 1828 - 1829 War between Russia and Turkey
- 1828 - 1833 French troops in Peloponnese
- 1829 Battle of Koronisia
- 1829 Protocol of London
- 1829 Battle of Petra
- 1830 Protocol of London for the Independence of Greece - Liberation of Peloponnese, Sterea Ellas and a few islands near Athens
- 1831 Assassination of Ioannis Kapodistrias
- 1832 Coronation of King Otto
- 1836 Military coup for Constitution
- 1841 Revolution of the Greeks in the island of Crete
- 1843 Military coup for Constitution
- 1844 Introduction of a new Constitution
- 1848 Revolution of the Greeks in the island of Cephalonia
- 1849 Revolution of the Greeks in the island of Samos
- 1850 Naval siege of Athens by the British fleet
- 1862 Expulsion of King Otto
- 1863 Enthronement of King George
- 1864 Liberation of Ionian Islands
- 1866 Revolution of the Greeks in the island of Crete
- 1878 Revolution of the Greeks in the island of Crete
- 1878 Revolution of the Greeks in Macedonia
- 1881 Liberation of Thessaly and Arta

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- 1896 First modern Olympic Games
- 1897 Revolution of the Greeks in the island of Crete
- 1898 International Financial Control
- 1905 - 1908 Macedonian War between Greeks and Bulgarians
- 1908 Military coup in Turkey for constitutional changes
- 1909 Military coup in Greece - Goudi
- 1910 Eleftherios Venizelos elected Prime Minister
- 1912 First Balkan War
- 1912 Liberation of Crete
- 1912 Liberation of Macedonia
- 1912 Liberation of Aegean Islands
- 1913 Liberation of Epirus
- 1913 Second Balkan War
- 1914 - 1918 First World War
- 1914 - 1919 Genocide of the Greeks by the Turks in Pontos
- 1914 - 1922 Genocide of the Greeks by the Turks in Asia Minor
- 1916 Ethniki Amyna in Thessaloniki
- 1917 Expulsion of King Konstantin
- May 1918 Battle of Skra
- Sep 1918 Vardar Offensive
- 1919 Crimea Campaign
- 1919 Liberation of Asia Minor
- 1919 Liberation of Thrace

## Timeline

- 1920 Treaty of Sevres
- 1920 Eleftherios Venizelos lost elections and King Konstantin return
- 1921 War in Asia Minor between the Greeks and the Turks
- 1922 Catastrophe of Asia Minor
- 1922 Expulsion of King Konstantin
- 1923 Treaty of Lausanne
- 1924 Second Greek Democracy
- 1928 - 1932 Eleftherios Venizelos administration
- 1929 Global Financial Crisis
- 1939 - 1945 Second World War
- 1940 Radar invention by the scientists Santorinis and Artemis for the Greek Army
- October 1940 - June 1941 War of Greece
- April 1941 - October 1944 Germans' occupation of Greece
- 1944 River Rubicon battle
- December 1944 - August 1949 Greek Civil War

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# Greece on fire

pioneers of freedom

Greece is a place where freedom is above all. Even above life. The human being is considered as a mortal body of flesh with immortal soul and potentially immortal spirit. It is our call to choose our path in life and our spirit is the guide. Since the ancient times the Greeks believe: "be free to be happy, be brave to be free". This precious heritage passes to each generation. When **Greece** is **on fire** the world gets lighter. It is the modern history of Greece, it is the Greek Spirit.

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